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Maurice Bloomfield, Dr. Kirby Smith, Dr. C. C. Marden, Mrs. Waller Bullock, Mrs. John D. Early, Miss Mary Worthington Milnor, Miss Mary Willis Minor. The business being over, a paper was read by Mr. Percy Reese that was written by Mr. Adolph Roeder, on "Eliminations in Folk-Lore Symbolism."

*May 27.* Dr. Hurd presented a most interesting paper on "Tattooing." He also gave a talk on "Maryland Farm Names," giving the names of some that had come under his notice and clearly suggested a folk-lore background. Additions were made to the list by members present. Miss Mary Speers gave some interesting "Maryland Variants of Folk-Tales."

An interesting feature of the meetings is the "Question Box ;" into which are put odd bits of folk-lore, obscure references for future study, and any matter that might interest the society. These bits are filed away for future use or reference.

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

##### BOOKS.

THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS. Edited by FRANCIS JAMES CHILD. (Part x.) Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Pp. 283-569.

The great work of Professor Child reaches its conclusion with this part, forming the second half of the fifth volume. The part is devoted to supplementary matter, including "Additions and Corrections," "Glossary," "Sources of the Texts," "Index of Ballad Titles," and "Bibliography." An interesting feature is a collection of hitherto unprinted melodies. Among the additions of especial interest are ballads obtained in North Carolina, by Mrs. E. M. Backus. One of these, "The Wife of Usher's Well," No. 79, is a very beautiful example of the preservation of a mediæval ballad. A version of No. 2, "The Elfin Knight," has been printed in this *Journal*, vol. vii. p. 228.

The editing of the part, a laborious task performed with minute care and wide learning, has devolved upon Professor G. L. Kittredge, who has added a biographical sketch of Professor Child.

The task which Professor Child had set himself consisted in a complete edition of English ballads, including every valuable copy of every known ballad. As the material can never be increased, this edition must forever remain a monument of the industry, sagacity, and learning of its author. As necessary to the elucidation and comprehension of the songs, all other ballad literature has been drawn on for illustration, the brief prefaces to the ballads constituting models of comparative research.

It had been the intention of Professor Child to introduce into this concluding part a brief general introduction, treating important questions of theory, relating to the periods, sources, and manner of composition of the ballads; but this study remained unexecuted and he left no notes sufficient to indicate his opinions. This theoretical examination, which in his mind

occupied a secondary place, therefore remains for others to complete. This work, however, has established important principles.

First, in regard to diffusion. The pride which Scotland has taken in its popular songs has led to a very general but altogether erroneous view of their origin. Almost all writers who have undertaken to treat of Scottish or Border ballads have regarded these as of local development, the expression of the nature, society and character of North Britain, a treasure quite distinct from any belonging to England proper. On the contrary, it may be said that there is no such thing as a distinctively Scottish popular song, unless a few later historical ballads are to be so called. In general, Scottish ballads are only surviving dialectic forms of old English. Again, English ballads, for the most part, appear to be only branches of a West European tree.

Next, as to date. The great majority of the songs are of modern record. But the manuscript of one piece, No. 23, is attributed to the thirteenth century. It may be presumed that a considerable portion of the ballads recently taken down have been sung from a time as remote; and there is no unlikeness that some of them might, in substance, have been heard two or three centuries earlier. In 1883 the writer of this notice affirmed ("Games and Songs of American Children," p. 11): "The English ballad was already born when Canute the Dane coasted the shore of Britain; its golden age was already over when Dante summed up mediæval thought in the 'Divina Commedia'; its reproductive period was at an end when Columbus enlarged the horizon of Europe to admit a New World; it was a memory of the past when the American colonies were founded." These views were at the time unreservedly approved by Professor Child, and in spite of all the admitted difficulties of the subject, we believe his opinion, as respects the outlines of the doctrine, had undergone no alteration. His comparative notes (such as those contained in prefaces to Nos. 7 and 59) indicate a very ancient origin for certain ballads.

*W. W. Newell.*

FOLK-LORE. OLD CUSTOMS AND TALES OF MY NEIGHBORS. By FLETCHER MOSS, of the Old Parsonage, Didsbury. Published by the author from his home, the Old Parsonage, Didsbury; and from his room in the Spread Eagle Hotel, Hanging Ditch. Manchester, March, 1898. Pp. xvii, 332.

The non-commercial character of this beautiful volume gives it an additional charm. It is liberally illustrated with presentations of such scenes as only England can furnish; quiet parish churches, ample halls, noble oaks, landscapes from the tranquil fields of Cheshire. It is impossible for an American to examine the book without a sigh over the deficiencies of his own new land, and without regret that even in England the peace and picturesqueness of the past is daily being merged in prosaic and bustling modern life. The character of the volume answers to its aspect; we have no labored scientific classification or discussion of origins, but the pleasant and discursive ramblings of a wanderer who, with plenty of leisure and no end but his own satisfaction, pauses to consider the